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THE REV. GEORGE PATTERSON, D.D.

THE Rev. Dr. Patterson, of Memphis, Tenn., was a character so unique, so individual, so well-known, personally and by reputation throughout the Church, that it has seemed to me most fitting that this brief sketch of his life, with some illustrations of his character and humor, should be put into permanent form. So loyal and so fine a nature ought to receive more than a passing notice. So true a friend deserves more than a casual tribute. I have not attempted to write a life, but to draw a picture. I am quite aware that it is very inadequate and imperfect; and yet I trust that it will not be unwelcome to the large number of Dr. Patterson's friends.

George Patterson (Papathakes) was born in Boston, Mass., July 13, 1828. His mother was Louisa Miles, the descendant of John Myles (or Miles), who came from England about 1636 and settled in Concord, Mass., and was the progenitor of many respectable New England families. His father was Petro Papathakes, a Greek, whose father had migrated from Athens to the United States about 1816. Petro and Louisa were a devoted couple; for when the only child, George, was born, Louisa, though a Unitarian, consented to his baptism in St. Paul's Church, Boston; and, four years afterwards, Petro yielded to his wife's influence and had his name changed, by act of Congress, from Papathakes to Patterson (*i. e.*, *παπα-θακης*, father's son—Patterson).

Petro died in 1833, when his son was less than five years old, and on his deathbed he requested his wife to have the boy brought up in his father's faith. "But you have no church in this country," she said. "Yes, I have," said the father; "the Church of England's faith is the same as mine."

Dr. Patterson used to tell, with deep and tender admiration and affection, how his mother conscientiously, though a Unitarian herself, brought him up in the Church, and

heard him say his catechism every Sunday; and then he would add in his whimsical way: "I tell you, of all these earthly religions give me the Unitarians."

We have no record of Dr. Patterson's early education. Dr. Alexander H. Vinton, of St. Paul's Church, was his rector and adviser. It does not appear that he entered Harvard College. In 1851, when he was twenty-three years old, he informed his mother that he was determined to take orders in the Church. She tried hard to dissuade him, both because her religion was different from his and because she objected to the ministry as a vocation for her son. She went so far, finally, as to say that, if he should become a priest in the Church, he could not and ought not to marry. Her son was firm, however, and declared that he was willing to take a vow of celibacy, if she thought it necessary to his entering the ministry. So he took the vow, and all his life remained unmarried. I have heard him say: "I presented my mother for confirmation afterwards, and she tried to absolve me from that vow; but it was too late. I had taken it. Vows are not very good things to take; but when you take them, you ought to stick to them."

In his later life some of his funniest and most characteristic sayings had reference to his unmarried state. One lady in Memphis, a stranger, who had but recently become a member of his parish, was greatly shocked by her rector's ridicule of his wife. "He is a terrible old man," she said. "I was much impressed with him at first, but when he was leaving he said, 'Well, I have to get home to that horrible wife of mine. She makes my life a burden.' In my opinion," she continued, "any man who speaks of his wife in that way ought not to be permitted to be a clergyman."

Once in a certain city Dr. Patterson was invited to a dinner party of considerable size and, while waiting in the drawing room, was besieged by an unmarried woman of uncertain age, who wanted to know whether he was a celibate from principle and whether he thought really that clergymen ought not to be allowed to marry. He managed to escape from her; but during the dinner, in a pause in the conversa-

tion, the lady suddenly piped up from the opposite end of the table and said: "Dr. Patterson, what did you say was the reason why you never married? Was it for the Lord's sake, or because you couldn't help yourself?" Immediately the Doctor answered in his inimitable way, "A little of both, ma'am. How is it with yourself?"

At Sewanee, about a year before his death, when he was over seventy, a professor met him one morning on the street, and asked him how he was. "We-ll, I'm not so peart, you know. I've heard about another one of my old friends getting married again. This is the third or fourth wife he's got. It's simply awful. Nobody's safe. I don't feel safe myself." They passed each other, and had gone about thirty yards, when the Doctor suddenly turned and called aloud to the Professor with great earnestness: "O Professor! Professor! Please don't let any of the ladies know what I said to you just now."

In March, 1852, young Patterson said good-by to his mother in Boston, and went to Plymouth, N. C., as a candidate for holy orders to assist the Rev. A. A. Watson (now Bishop of East Carolina) in his parochial school. He was ordained deacon by Bishop Ives in Grace Church, Plymouth, April 9, 1852, and priest by Bishop Atkinson, in Holy Trinity Church, Hertford, April 27, 1856. When Dr. Watson removed to Newbern in 1858, Mr. Patterson remained in the neighborhood of Plymouth, having charge of the plantation work of Mr. Josiah Collins, and living at Lake Scuppernong. He was universally beloved, and the negro slaves responded with childlike delight and affection to his efforts for their spiritual improvement.

The associations of this period were the most sacred and helpful in his life, he used to say; and he was ever enthusiastically loyal to North Carolina and to the friendships of that time. To the day of his death a North Carolina ancestry was an all-sufficient recommendation of any man or woman to Dr. Patterson's love and service. He cherished the memories of Bishop Ives and Bishop Atkinson, and delighted to tell about them. Bishop Ives, especially, exerted a great

influence upon him, and he always declared, with tears in his eyes, that only mental depression could have induced the Bishop to leave the Church.

When the Civil War broke out Mr. Patterson became chaplain of the Third Regiment of North Carolina State troops, and served through the four years with unremitting devotion and tenderness, winning the love and confidence of all who were brought in contact with him. The close of the war found him as post chaplain at the Chimborazo Hospital, in Richmond.

Some years ago a gentleman, an old Confederate soldier, was visiting Sewanee, and as he walked through the chapel yard he saw Dr. Patterson, surrounded, as usual, by a crowd of students, telling them stories and lecturing them in his quaint and humorous way. "Gracious," he said, "that must be Mr. Patterson. I haven't seen him for thirty years. I wouldn't take anything for the privilege of speaking to him." "Do you know," he continued, "I haven't heard of that good man since the day at second Manassas, when I was lying wounded, with hundreds of others on the field, and the bullets were flying thick as hail, and the chaplain of the Third North Carolina, regardless of danger and loaded down with canteens, was going here and there cheering us up and ministering to us. God bless his heart, how fine and brave he was that day!"

Some of Dr. Patterson's war stories surpassed anything in humor and pathos we ever heard; but his manner was so unique, his laughter so absolutely inimitable, and his expression so delicious, that it would be impossible to tell them as he did. Only those who knew him personally can appreciate the humor, as he puffed his pipe and said: "You see, I was chaplain of the Third North Carolina Regiment. Well, did you ever see any of these butternut jeans we used to wear during the war? We thought that they were mighty good trousers in those days, and I had just one pair. It was along in '63, and clothes were not plentiful, and that pair of pants was a treasure to me. Well, our brigade was in camp, waiting for orders to march, and I had been preaching to

our men and trying to get them into good ways, when one morning a young fellow came to me and said that he wanted to be baptized. 'Of course,' I said, 'you ought to be baptized.' 'But,' said he, 'I want to be immersed in the river.' 'Immersed?' I said; 'Why a dipper of water will do as much good as a barrel full. It's not the water that does the good, anyhow. It's only a symbol.' But the young fellow said he had promised his mother to be immersed, and so I just had to decide quick. Of course the Church allows immersion; but there were those pants of mine, and what would I do if we had to march that day? So I went to the colonel and said: 'Colonel, there is a boy who wants to be baptized—baptized by immersion—and I want to know whether we're going to stay here long enough for my pants to get dry.' The Colonel said: 'Chaplain, you go ahead and baptize him.' So off I went and had the service down at the river, and then I rushed to my tent, undressed, and went to bed, while my darky hung up my pants to dry. Do you know—Do you know—I hadn't been lying there ten minutes before the orders came to march, and away I had to go with those wet butternut jeans? Well, I never see a pair of them in a country store that I don't think of that march and that baptism."

Sometime in 1886 Dr. Patterson, having taken the rectorship of Grace Church, Memphis, made me a visit at Se-wanee. One night he lighted his pipe and began to tell about the war. "You know," he said, "I was chaplain of the Third North Carolina Regiment, and we had a fine young officer named Brown—Allen Brown. I knew his mother, and she said to me: "Mr. Patterson, I want you to look after my boy.' 'Of course I shall,' I said. 'He is a good boy; and if anything happens to him, I shall give him the last rites of the Church.' She said she hoped he wouldn't need my services in that way, but I promised her all the same.

"Well, we got on nicely—very nicely—for a while, till we got to that Gettysburg place. You've heard of that place, haven't you? O, it was a horrible place and we had such a hard time! Well, after the second day's fight at Gettysburg,

some of the boys came in and said: 'Mr. Patterson, your boy's done shot out there. He's killed; we saw him fall.' 'Who is it,' I said. 'Your boy, Allen Brown. He's dead or badly wounded.' 'Well,' I said, 'I've got to go out there to find him.' 'But you can't go. They are still fighting right across that field, and you'll get killed yourself.' 'I can't help it,' I said; 'I promised his mother.' And I had promised his mother, you see, and I was obliged to go. So I got a lantern and started out. It wasn't pleasant. I didn't say it was pleasant. But I had promised his mother, and had to go. I looked for him some time, and then I found him. He had a big hole in his chest, and he was bound to die. And I raised him up and said: 'Allen, my boy, I'm so sorry. I'm afraid you can't get well.' And he said: 'No, Mr. Patterson, it's all up with me. But you'll tell mother, won't you, that I died doing my duty, with my face to the enemy?' 'Indeed I will, my boy. But Allen, you're a good Church boy, and I promised your mother to give you the last rites of the Church. And, you know I can't stay out here. I just can't do it. And you are going to die about the turn of the day, and they're not going to bury you. They'll throw you into a ditch without a service. Allen, I tell you what I'll do. I'll read the burial service over you right now.' And he said: 'All right, Mr. Patterson.' So I gave him the lantern to hold, and I read the burial service over him, and he answered the responses. Now that was remarkable, wasn't it?" said the Doctor. And I agreed that it certainly was.

A week afterwards Dr. Patterson went to Nashville to visit some old North Carolina friends, and as he was walking down Union Street one day a tall man passed him, looked hard at him, and then turned round and called out: "Hello, there!" "Hello, yourself," said the Doctor. "Isn't this Mr. Patterson, of North Carolina?" "Of course it is; who else could it be?" "Well, don't you know me?" "Why, how could I know you? I never saw you before in my life." "Well, I'm Allen Brown." "What? you don't say! Aret you that boy I buried at Gettysburg?" And it was indeed the same boy, who had been greatly helped by Dr. Patterson's

care for his wound that night, had been taken to a Federal field hospital the next morning, and was nursed back to health. Col. Brown is still living near Columbia, Tenn. The newspapers gave an account of this extraordinary recognition the next day, and said that Dr. Patterson's laugh could be heard two blocks away. It was a tribute to Dr. Patterson's work as chaplain in the army, that in Richmond, in 1864, Mrs. Davis, the wife of the President of the Confederacy, embroidered a stole with her own hands and gave it to him, and he kept it as one of his treasures to the day of his death.

After the war, Dr. Patterson served again as assistant to Dr. Watson for five years, this time in St. James Church, Wilmington, N. C., and in 1870 became rector of St. John's Church, Wilmington. Here he might have happily remained for the rest of his life, for the people loved him and he was devoted to North Carolina; but in 1874 the Bishops on the Board of Trustees at Sewanee persuaded him to give up his parish and become the financial agent of the University, to solicit funds for the endowment. It was a most difficult task, and one for which a man of Dr. Patterson's sensitive and outspoken nature was wholly unfitted. He therefore resigned it at the end of the second year, and took work in Texas under his dear friend Bishop Gregg. It was during this period that he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of North Carolina. In 1886 he accepted a call to Grace Church, Memphis, Tenn., where he remained as rector until his death, December 10, 1901. The work of those sixteen years impressed his personality not only upon his parish but upon the whole community. He was Deputy to the General Convention, and a member of the Standing Committee. He was the best-known clergyman in the diocese, and Church people everywhere regarded it a privilege to entertain him. He abounded in sympathy and tenderness, and won the hearts of younger men by his inexhaustible kindness and interest. He was loyal to his Bishop, who represented to him the Church; and in all matters of moment he was splendid in the outspoken courage of his opinions.

As a preacher, Dr. Patterson was very original and rather dogmatic. His English style was simple and direct, very classical, and sometimes exquisitely eloquent. His peculiarities of voice and manner, irresistibly engaging, often made one lose sight of his clear and beautiful language. Many stories are told of his eccentricities in preaching, and of his ability to compel the interest of his hearers. In one Southern parish, it is said, he was invited to preach, and, upon inquiry, found that the congregation was composed largely of sugar planters, who sent their wives and children to Church and Sunday school, while they themselves went hunting and fishing. Membership in this Church was a kind of passport to "good society." So the Doctor took his text from St. Luke xii. 20 (about the rich man who would pull down his barns and build greater, and would take his ease) and read it very deliberately: "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Then, throwing his spectacles on top of his head and looking earnestly at the people, he said: "My brethren, it doesn't say that this was a bad man nor a vicious man. He was a prosperous and popular man. He was a man that we all know very well. He was a wealthy planter. He owned a sugar plantation up the river, and lived in town, and on Sunday went fishing or lounged at the club while his family went to church. He patronized the Lord by paying his pew rent, and when he knew he would get his name in the paper he would give something to charity. People said: 'What a fine man he is! He's one of our representative citizens! He is such a charming gentleman!' But, my friends, the Lord said, 'Thou fool!' and I reckon, I RECKON when Almighty God calls a man a fool he's a fool."

In his private conversations with people, his ready wit and kindly way of saying very plain things made him a power. Many men and women have had their lives changed by an hour's conference with Dr. Patterson. He did not fear to tell the whole, the unvarnished truth, and, although it cut to the quick sometimes, his way of doing it disarmed resentment.

I remember going with him once to ask a prominent business man for charity, and when we entered the private office we found the gentleman busy and evidently annoyed at our intrusion. He swung himself round in his chair, and very petulantly demanded, "Well, well, what can I do for you now?"—and the Doctor replied, with well-simulated meekness of manner, "Perhaps, sir, the first thing you *might* do would be to show your politeness, and say good morning!"

I shall never forget his concluding the examination of a candidate for priest's orders by putting his hand on the young man's shoulder, looking him kindly in the eye, and saying: "My dear brother, this is not part of the examination, but it is something you ought to know. You have done pretty well to-day, pretty well. But you are mistaken about one thing. You think that your views and opinions on theology are much more important than they are. You do not know it, but it is a fact. Other people don't set near as high a value on your intellect and learning as you do yourself; and you will discover, as you get older, that it is much better for other people to find out for themselves how clever you are than it is for you to proclaim it."

Not long before he died he brought me a letter and said: "This is a remarkable letter. It relates to an incident that happened to me this summer. I was going off for a vacation, and the train stopped at a siding somewhere, and the conductor, a great big man, was very much annoyed about something. I've no doubt that he was provoked, but he got angry and began to swear in a way that I never heard before. It was marvelous and terrible—the kind of oaths he used. I was really shocked, and I could not stand it. So I got up and came behind him, put my hand upon his big shoulder, and said: 'My son! My son! Did your mother teach you to talk that way? If she did, it's all right. But if she didn't, I wish you wouldn't speak of our Heavenly Father that way.' Well, he turned around, and his face flushed, and he said: 'I beg your pardon, father.' 'O,' I said, 'you needn't beg my pardon. Beg your Heavenly Father's pardon.' 'Well, I will never do it again.' 'O yes, you will.

Nobody who does it as well as you do can stop right off. But I'll tell you what. Here's my card. I am Doctor Patterson, of Memphis, and the next time you get provoked and feel it coming on you that way, you stop and think of me and write me a little note, and that will help you to control yourself.' "

"And," continued the Doctor, "That's what this letter's about. You see he did remember, and he has written this letter to say that he has had another attack, and that he is trying to reform."

Dr. Patterson was a true child of nature. He loved flowers. He loved children. Perhaps it was the old Greek instinct that made him susceptible to everything beautiful, as his heart vibrated with the very joy of living. To him, in a peculiar degree, the revelation of Christ was the consecration of an innate optimism, which instinctively and intuitively accepted and rejoiced in the Father's love. No man's ministry in sickness and sorrow was more beautiful and helpful, because his sympathy was profound and involuntary, his tenderness was the native unstudied expression of a heart that felt very deeply for all the pains and perplexities of men who were his fellow-children in the great world and school of God. The simplicity and directness of the child, he carried into everything he undertook. He could not conceal his feeling and his preferences. He would often say: "Perhaps I am prejudiced—I believe I am—but I cannot help it."

Once, in a diocesan convention, a dear friend of his was referred to in what seemed to him to be a slighting way by a prominent clergyman who had a grievance. Dr. Patterson immediately rose in his place and eulogized his friend with great emphasis, expressing his opinion of men who spoke disparagingly of those who were not present to defend themselves. It was a sharp and scathing rebuke, and unanswerably effectual. Afterwards the Doctor's conscience troubled him, and he said to me: "Do you think I did wrong to say what I did to-day?" "Well, yes, Doctor, it was very severe language to use to a brother clergyman in a public

debate." "Then I must apologize." "I think you ought." Some time afterwards the clergyman came and told me: "Dr. Patterson is a very peculiar man. He insulted me in the convention; but yesterday he came to my house and was shown into the library, where I went to see him. I found him standing, and he said: 'Thank you, sir, but I won't sit down. I have come to say, Mr. —, that one of my friends tells me that I was wrong in saying to you what I said at the convention, and that I ought to apologize. So I came here to apologize, and I beg your pardon. But for all that, I want you to understand that I think I was right, and that what I said is true all the same.' "

The Doctor had one sermon that he preached with special fire and earnestness, and that was on the text: "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (1 Cor. xiv. 8.) His life was a commentary on that text. If there ever was a man who tried to be consistently direct, straightforward, and unmistakable in his judgments, it was he. You always knew where to find him. He was a loyal and unchanging friend, and he was a simple-hearted, outspoken, and fearless opponent. He died, as he had lived, calm in his invincible faith, in perfect charity with men, but hating sin and the results of sin—believing in God, and in God's love, through Jesus Christ, and therefore ever happy, even here, with unshaken confidence in the ultimate victory of goodness and of truth. His name is blessed, and his works do follow him.

THOMAS F. GAILOR.